"Shamus O'Brien."

The Broadway Theatre came dangerously near to the Metropolitan Opera House last night. As you sat there in grave expectancy you began to look around for tiaras, to sniff the patchouli of the horse-"Shamus C'Brien," the new "romantic Irish opera," by George H. Jessop and C. Villiers Stanford, Mr. Duff fished it out from the London waters, and brought it over. It was produced for the first time in this country at the Broadway last night. Those who were there in the firm conviction that life is real, life is earnestand all that sort of thing-were not disap-

It may at once be sald that "Shamus O'Brien" Is a clever plece of work, with a good, substantial, honest, utterly conventional story well told, and a musicianly, conscientious and uninspired score. What the authors of the opera have missed is the deft, blithe spark of popularity. "Brian Boru," "Shamus's" predecessor, was less MANY BOTTLES OF WINE OPENED. clever, less conscientious, and less likely to meet with the approval of the longhaired ones, but it was saturated with popularity, and it appealed strongly to tired bread and butter earners. (Please note that I insist upon metropollian audiences being composed of tired bread and butter earners out for relaxation.) "Shamus O'Brien" will ot, therefore, enter into competition with

The story told in the new work is one that we have often seen in the popular price theatres of this city. It is a sort of Chauncey Olcott story, without Chauncey You get the outlawed Shamus recking with native humor; a captain of the British army in gorgeons scarlet; a colleen, a piper, a peasant former, a traitorvillain, and a chorus of lassies prepared to troop in at a moment's notice and encase Shamus in the centre of the stage: trials of Shamus and the loyalty of his wife are concisely set forth, with musical Interruptions of course, and "Shamus" needs no synopsis. There is not a thentre goer of the ripe age of twelve in this city who could not understand it from beginning to end. That is a merit. Yet with Dr. Standford's exceedingly

pretty music-and some of the numbers are really gems of melody and give examples of what we call "color"—"Shamus O'Brien" drags. It becomes hideous. Both the author and composer have too much to say, and too much time to say it in. They lack the art of condensation. They have merit without form-and this will deal "Shamus" its cruellest blow, for no andlence will believe that a comic opera is really good if it bores them-that is to say, no audience outside of the Metropolitan Opera House. "Shamus" is the sort of work of which,

when asked for an opinion, you would say: "Excellent! Very fine. Masterly in the extreme." But you wouldn't sit through it more than once. It reminds me of Miss Edgeworth's novels-always held np as samples of propriety and respectability. You advise your sisters to read them and then-sneak off in a corner with something yellow for yourself.

The finale of the first act, however, pleased the audience, and the jig before that finale was as picturesque a comic opera feature as one could wish to see. It was vivaciously and hilariously danced, and the cloud that had been settling upon the spirits of the spectators was quickly dissipated. A song in the second act, sung by the Captain, made an instantaneous hit and was redemanded. It is easy to see throughout "Shamus O'Brien" that Dr. Stanford has tried very hard to steer away from oratoric methods. It was also easy to see that the task was not a facile one, and that when he was "light" he felt somewhat ashamed of himself. If comic operas were written for the especial delectation of musical critics "Shamus O'Brien's" fate would not be in doubt for an instant. I have before me printed testimony to the fact that the Liverpool Daily Post, in an editorial, considered it "deservedly one of the most popular of operas;" that the Dublin Daily Express enthused, and that the Dublin Freeman's Journal owned no vocabulary large enough to do the opera justice.

Mr. Duff's imported company made an the hero, in a conventional but always agreeable way. His voice, afflicted with a slight vibrato, was nevertheless adequate, and the audience liked him, while the evening was still young. Better work was done by Reginald Roberts and Joseph O'Maraparticularly by the latter-and A. G. Cunningham as the usual black-coated priest also distinguished himself. The men proved to be better than the women. Miss Annie Roberts was somewhat uninteresting, and Miss Carr Shaw-sald to be a sister of the fastidious author of "Arms and the Man," acted better than she sang. Mr. Duff triumphed with his chorus-a body of young women exceedingly well drilled, tuneful and comely. When I add that, in addition to all these good points, "Shamus O'Brien" has a poetic stage setting and an irreproachable stage management, you will wonder why I have tempered all this praise by expressions of doubt.

But the demon of popularity tugs at my pen, and tells me not to be too good, because we were none of us too good-except when we were at the Metropolitan Opera House. That demon also tells me to remember "Brian Boru," which I have already recorded as the best comic opera-New York has seen this season. And I cannot forget it. I shall not swerve from my milegiance to "Brian." "Shamus" is very nice and clever, but it is not a light entertainment, or one that will bring joility to the community. ALAN DALE.

NEW VARIETY THEATRE.

J. S. Shea, Proprietor of Shea's Music Hall, W Build One on Upper Third Avenue.

J. S. Shea, proprietor of Shea's Music Hall, in trans-Harlem, has purchased four lots on Third avenue, between One Hundred and Fifty-second and One Hundred and Fitfty-second streets, upon which he will erect a variety theatre.

The new playhouse will be constructed of Philadelphia brick, with brownstone and limestone trimmings, and the main en-

trance will be on Third avenue. The interfor will be decorated in white, pink and gold, and the house will have a seating capacity of about one thousand.

Ground will be broken early in the Spring, and Mr. Shea expects the building will be completed by November, M. A. Levenson, at present manager of Shea's Music Hall, will probably be the business manager of the new enterprise.

Firemen's Efficiency Rewarded. J. H. Little & Co. have sent their check for \$50 to the Fire Commissioners to be applied to the firemen's relief fund, in recognition of the

Laurier Will Not Be a Knight. Montreal, Jan. 5.-Wilfred Laurier, the Do-minion Premier, has refused to accept the proferred honor of knighthood,

MR. FITCH NOW

shoe, and to hunt about for the long-haired ones. The cause of it all was Tells with Glee How He Related a Story of Treasure Trove.

Those who went to frivol were severely re- Made His Friend McDonald the Possessor of All the "Huzzar" Millions.

> Old English Gold by the Basketful.

Manhattan Clubmen Excited on Being Shown What Looked Like Absolute Proof-Mayor Strong Repeats the Story.

"That," he said, in answer to a question four of these gold pieces."

The Comptroller took out his wallet and for it is the talk of the clubs, and the Mayor is telling it with a straight face at tering and face still distinct. City Hall."

have found the treasure?"

pened, and as I told it. digging for the treasure lost with His bidder, but among the lowest, and the

at they are at work yet.
"John McDonald is a member of the spot and w great contracting firm of Clark & McDon- the bushel-doing business at ald. He built the tunnel in Baltimore, the showed them the coin he gave West Shore Railroad and many other great things. He is now at work on the Je-rome Park reservoir, one of the most as rapidly as possible. I think it i stupendous jobs he has ever undertaken.

Comptroller Fitch chuckled. It was not the laugh with which he corners the smug heads of departments who ride in carriages sovereign of the reign of George I. He said one of the coins. He thought it was the

at the city's expense, but the deep, self-sat-isfied chuckle of a man who has a good thing in good shape. In digging the reservoir he had unearthed the remains of a British fortification and had found a skeleton, beside which were

wonder you did not hear the story before, produced the coin, a thin, glittering bit of

Who is this McDonald who is said to McDonald has plenty of money, and I convergence from the treasure?" "Now, look here; it's too funny to print.
No? Well, I'll tell you the story as it happened, and as I teld it.

would connect him with the hunt for the "For years and years persons have been Huzzar treasure. He was not the lowest

digging for the treasure lost with His Majesty's Frigate Huzzar, which left England during the Revolutionary War to pay the troops stationed in North America. She was known to have on board millions in gold coin, principally sovereigns of the reigns of George I. and George II.

"The Huzzar went ashore in Hell Gate, or opposite Ninety-seventh street, or some where around there, and this treasure was lost. Several companies have been organized to recover this treasure—some of them incorporated, I believe, and I don't know but they are at work yet.

"John McDonald is a member of the septian and work over this septiand with the present Jerome Park.

"John McDonald is a member of the septian and work over this septiand with the present Jerome Park.

"John McDonald is a member of the septian and work over this septiand with the present Jerome Park.

"John McDonald is a member of the polymer of the confident could do the work.

"I showed my coin at the club and told think of. I said McDonald had a letter from a member of the family of the paymaster of the old Huzzar, to the effect that the treasure didn't 20 down with the schip. This letter showed there had been a conspiracy among the crew, and that Donald had a letter from a member of the ship. This letter showed there had been a conspiracy among the crew, and the only man we felt confident could do the work.

"I showed my coin at the club and told think of. I said McDonald had a letter from a member of the family of the paymaster of the old Huzzar, to the effect that the treasure didn't 20 down with the schip. This letter showed there had been a conspiracy among the crew, and that before they scuttled the ship they removed the reasure—1,500,000 gold pieces—to the site of the paymaster of the old Huzzar, to the effect that the treasure didn't 20 down with the ship. This letter showed there had been a conspiracy among the crew, and that before they scuttled the ship they removed the treasure—1,500,000 gold pieces—to the site of the paymaster of the old think of I. I s

YOUNG MR. VANDERBILT AND HIS BRIDE WHO ARE EXPECTED HOME TO-DAY. R. AND MRS. CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, Jr., will probably arrive to-day from Europe. They will go directly to the home of Mrs. Vanderbilt's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Richard T. Wilson, No. 511 Fifth avenue, where they will remain until next Spring.

The young couple went abroad almost immediately after their marriage last Summer, and it was their intention to remain in Parls during the Winter months. They had taken apartments in the gay city near those of Mrs. Goelet, Mrs. Vanderbilt's sister. Lately, however, they have decided that they would prefer to be in New York.

MELBA ABANDONS BRUNHILDE.

The Diva, After Consulting a Boston Throat Specialist, Decides Not to Risk Her Voice on Heavy Wagnerian Roles.

HAT will the Wagner cult have to say with respect to Mme. Melba's sig- declared that he wished to make charges nificant announcement made herewith that she will not further subject her voice to the strain of singing the role of Brunhilde?

against Policeman Joseph Garvey, of the West One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street voice to the strain of singing the role of Brunhilde?

This announcement was telegraphed to the Journal yesterday from Station. Boston, whither the diva had gone to consult a throat specialist. Though, "I was going home late Thursday night," happly, the specialist's verdict was that Melba's organ is unimpaired she has de- said Ware, "and at Eighth avenue and One cided to eschew the heavier Wagnerian roles for some time to come.

In view of this decision the statements of two well-known vocal instructors—one alfan and the other American—which, by the way, were received prior to the re-Italian and the other American-which, by the way, were received prior to the recelpt of Melba's announcement, seem almost prophetic.

Evidences multiply daily that the Wagner controversy in musical circles is gaining in interest.

MELBA WILL ABANDON THE ROLE OF BRUNHILDE.

Boston, Jan. 5.—As strong as I find the role of Brunhilde, I do not intend singing it again, at least for some years. My last reason for this decision is my belief that in singing it often there would be danger of injuring my voice. My opinion is confirmed by the advice of those whom I consider good authority.

I wish it to be understood that I say this only in reference to my individual case, and that I do not assume to give advice to other artists on this subject. NELLIE MELBA.

IT IS SAFER TO RESPECT WAGNER THAN TO SING HIM.

It is an exaggeration to say, as Jean De Reszke says in the Journal, that Wagner stands alone among operatic composers. I respect the grandeur of Wagner, but I do not respect him above Verdi, Mozart, Handel, Cherubini or Rossini. He is one of the great ones, but not the greatest. Wagner never wrote anything superior to the trio in "William Tell," which is a divine inspiration that appeals to all without fatiguing the mind of any. And so it is with the quartet from "Rigoletto." No effort is required to comprehend such music as this, and yet its quality is of the highest grade.

The case of Mme. Melba is before the public. It is said that her voice suffered from the demands made upon it by one of the heavy Wagnerian roles. Mel-ba has one of the most beautiful voices I ever heard in my life-in range, in quality and in facility of execution.

But Melba ought to respect Wagner so highly as to stay away from him. The one divine instrument is the human voice. It is an insult to make it secondary to mechanical instruments. This divine and delicate organ should not be compelled to strain itself-as is often its fate-in order to be heard above the orchestra. ACHILLE ERRANI.

WAGNER'S INFLUENCE DISASTROUS TO LYRIC ART.

Some of the burdens which Wagner puts upon the voice are positively ruinous to it. Brunhilde, in "Die Walkure," when she ascends the mountain, giving forth the unearthly cry of the Rhine maidens, furnishes an instance of this kind. I know of nothing so disastrous to the human voice as superhuman efforts such as this. It may come under the head of musical declaration, but it is not o

are positively rulnous to it. Brunhilde, in "Die Walkure," when she ascends the mountain, giving forth the unearthly cry of the Rhine maidens, furnishes an instance of this kind. I know of nothing so disastrous to the human voice as superhuman efforts such as this. It may come under the head of musical declamation, but it is not singing. We have from the pens of other masters works which are equally dramatic

with those of Wagner, yet which do not call upon the singer for harmful vocal effort. "Aida," "L'Africaine," "The Queen of Sheba" and "Traviata" are among such works. It is because of the existence of such operas as these that we have such artists as Pattl, Gerster, Nilsson and Melba. In my opinion the influence of Wagner's operas will never produce such singers. I am sorry that such an artist as Melba should be willing to risk her perfect

voice and method by essaying such a role as Brunhilde. MARY H. SKINNER.

most remarkable find of treasure he had ever heard of. It certainly did come under the head of 'Important if True.'"

ALDERMAN WARE HIS ACCUSER. Policeman Garvey Charged with Calling Him

Vile Names. Alderman Ware visited Police Headquarers yesterday, walked into Acting Inspec- HARLEM OPERA HOUSE, Ev. 8:15, Mat. Sat. 2 tor Thompson's office and in loud tones

Hundred and Twenty-fifth street I came strated with him he called me vile names, STAR. told me to go to a warm place, called me a 'bum' actor, and said that I had a bunch a 'bum' actor, and said that I had a bunch of bridge tickets in my pocket. I don't know what he meant by that, but it must be something awful. When I asked him where his station house was, he told me it was in Nine Hundred and Ninety-ninth street."

Inspector Thompson accepted the complaint, and Garrey will be brought up tomorrow charged with conduct unbecoming an officer. Alderman Ware said he would push the case.

\$60,000,000 Increase in Tax Levy. The Deputy Tax Commissioners have comple the Deput AR Commissioners have completed the assessment of real and personal property for the tax levy of 1897, and estimate an increased valuation of about \$60,000,000. In 1896, the levy was fixed upon at \$2,106,484,905; now it is figured at \$2,166,484,905. On Saturday the deputtes will produce their assessment rolls in the Supreme Court and swear to them before Justice Van Brunt.

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way, room 20.

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PIERSON.—At San Francisco, January 4, Sarah Buchanan Pierson, beloved mother of Ar-thur B., Mabel and Frank W.

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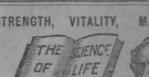
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